

Missionary World.

HEATHEN NEED AND CHRISTIAN DUTY.

Men always and everywhere need four things, and the deeper and truer their insight into their own state and that of others, the more conscious are they of the need.

1. They need, in some true and adequate sense, to know God.
2. To know how sins may be forgiven.
3. How a sinful nature may be changed.
4. If there is a future life and how to prepare for it.

Men have been searching after light on these awful mysteries, which concern all, for thousands of years, and none more profoundly or persistently than the races of Asia, who have come to accept Mohammedanism, Buddhism and Hinduism as their solution of the great riddle—that is, variously, a belief in the stern, unlovable Allah of the Koran; or of a god who neither sees, nor hears, nor cares for the wants or woes of any creatures; or Pantheism; or hundreds of millions of gods—whose ideas of the future are a heaven of sensuality, or metempsychosis, or a state hardly to be distinguished from annihilation, and which offers nothing to the sinful but fatalism, or dreadful sufferings, or expiation by physical torture, or deliverance wrought out by self through countless transmigrations!

The practical influence of religion is most worthy of consideration, and it is here that every non-Christian system fails. Yet it is the side our "philosophers" least notice, and sometimes entirely ignore. No heathen religion has a rational theology, an all around system of ethics, or a power above and beyond man to raise him toward what he should be; and in many instances, instead of curbing the downward tendencies of our humanity, they pander to human weaknesses and passions. Therefore it is that all through the East the people are gloomy, hopeless fatalists; ignorant, poor, suspicious, and morally weak; and oppression, wrong, falsehood, fraud and vice are so prevalent. And all this in spite of great intellectual and physical qualities! Truly "the world by wisdom knows not God!"

There is no doubt a most pathetic interest attaching to those "religions of the East." On their philosophical, speculative side they display wonderful subtlety and intellectual power in dealing with the most solemn and mysterious questions which can engage human thought. They reveal an ardent desire "to find out God" and sacred truth. They contain many wise, beautiful, elevated and pure sentiments. This is their best side. But many of those who study comparative religion overestimate its value, because they look too much at its philosophical, and not sufficiently at its practical, aspects. They pass by too lightly the triviality, grossness and filthiness with which it is so often associated, and its inherent inability to meet the deepest needs, sorrows and cravings of ordinary humanity; that is, of the great masses of mankind.

The great questions, then, which all the ages have been seeking to answer, and which it concerns all to have answered, receive their only true and satisfactory reply from the Bible, and especially from the life and lips of Jesus Christ. The revelation there given of God, of the forgiveness of sins, of the life everlasting, and the renewing power of the Holy Spirit, is not only transcendently superior to what is anywhere else taught, but it commends itself to the judgment and experience as rational and philosophical, as in agreement with our consciousness of what men are, what they require, and what they should be. It meets, as nothing else does, our wants, our hopes, and our aspirations, and it is associated with a divine, practical power, able to change the moral nature and to make men victorious over sin.

Thus, as a system of belief relating to the sublimest and most important of all subjects, as a most definite and authorita-

tive system of morals and the principles on which they are based, as a force enabling men to rise toward God, and always making for righteousness and goodness, and as the means of imparting a divine life to the soul—the highest of all blessings—it stands immeasurably above and beyond all other religions. It is the substance, they are shadows only. It does what they pretend only to do.—By Edward Storrow.

The *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, No. 19, publishes some interesting data on the Jewish conversions to Christianity as officially reported by the Prussian authorities. According to this source, from 1816 to 1840, in Prussia, there were 3,273 Jewish converts, or an average of 117 in a Jewish population of about 160,000. From 1844 to 1871 there are no absolutely reliable statistics, but the maximum number is 2,000. Between 1872 and 1888 the number of Jewish baptisms was 2,195, or an average of 129 in a Jewish population of 300,000. These figures refer only to the nine old Prussian provinces, and do not include the three—Hanover, Schleswig-Holstein, and Hessen. From 1830 to 1836 there were 326 cases in Berlin, out of 750 in all Prussia; in the years 1875 to 1888, out of 1,901, there were 890 in Berlin alone. Singularly enough the old influential Jewish families in Berlin, such as the Mendelssohns and Friedlanders, furnish the greatest number of converts. On the other hand, a few Christians occasionally join the Jewish communion. In the fourteen years between 1875 and 1888, there were 135 such cases in Prussia.

The Free Church is making a new departure in opening in Edinburgh an Institute to train women as missionaries for the foreign field. With the growth, during recent years, of women's missions, such a step was inevitable; perhaps the surprising thing is that it was not taken earlier. Men who mean to become messengers of the gospel, whether at home or abroad, have to pass through a long course of instruction; and it is hardly to be expected that women should be fitted for similar work without any special training at all. The real reason, of course, for the neglect to train them is not any confidence in their higher capacity, but simply that very little thought was given either to them or their work. At length, however, a change of sentiment is in progress. Women's work is manifesting its importance in the foreign field, and is coming thereby to be better appreciated at home, and so the worker is claiming more consideration. The value of the end raises the value of the instrument, and it is seen to be worth while to fit the instrument for its purpose.—*United Presbyterian Magazine*.

The English language is to become the missionary language of the globe. The fact that at the recent National Congress in India all the speeches and proceedings were in English is a striking illustration of the wide diffusion of that tongue. There were gathered at Madras seven hundred delegates from all parts of India, Afghanistan, Nepal, and Sincde. They spoke nine different languages, and the English was the only medium through which the proceedings could be satisfactorily conducted. Great Britain's colonial enterprises have been probably the largest factor in spreading a knowledge of English. It is also found that in countries like Java, where Great Britain has no control, the knowledge of English is steadily growing.

Dr. De Forest affirms that in Japan the two powerful departments of education and of war seem to discourage any acceptance of the Christian religion. He says that "Christian teachers and students in the government schools have found it often very uncomfortable to be known as Christians, and large numbers of them have deserted the churches, though they almost universally assert that they have not given up their faith."

The unintended result of Mrs. Besant's Theosophist propaganda in India seems to have been to convert to Christianity a Madras gentleman of liberal education and good social position. Mr. Ramanujam, M.A., B.L., has declared that he was led by these speeches to make inquiry, and was induced to confess his faith in Christ chiefly by witnessing the exemplary lives lived by his Christian teachers.

The treasurer of the Baptist Missionary Society has practical views of the qualification of a missionary, these are, piety, sound health, linguistic capacity and a temper under control.

A Protestant place of worship has been opened in the intensely Romish town of Girgenti in the Sicilian province of that name.

PULPIT, PRESS AND PLATFORM.

Ram's Horn: The busier a man is the harder it is for the devil to get into conversation with him.

Young Men's Era: The difference between a wise man and an enthusiast is, one drives with reins and the other without.

Ruskin: To watch the corn grow, or the blossoms set; to draw hard breath over the plowshare or spade, to read, to think, to love, to pray, these are the things that make men happy.

Henry Drummond: And there is a sense of touch to be acquired—such a sense as the woman had who had touched the hem of Christ's garment, that wonderful electric touch called faith, which moves the very heart of God.

Arthur Helps: The heroic example of other days is in great part the source of the courage of each generation; and men walk up composedly to the most perilous enterprises, beckoned onward to the shades of the brave that were.

F. W. Brighton: To teach a few Sunday School children week after week commonplace, simple truths—persevering in spite of dullness and mean capacities—is a more glorious occupation than the highest meditations or creations of genius which edify or instruct only our own solitary soul.

Archdeacon Farrar: The children of the drunkard die like flies, if they survive, they grow up dirty, repellent, depraved, thievish, beyond the reach of beneficent activity, to occupy the cell of the felon, to lie in the suicide's grave, or to become the scourge of the society of which they have been the helpless victims.

S. S. Times: Whoever else may be ready to trust us, no one of us ought to trust himself. Others may be sure that we would never fail in fidelity to the right. We know that we are liable to fail at any time. He that thinketh he standeth is already tottering for a fall. Only the one who realizes his constant danger of proving untrue has the possibility of a sure standing in the way of truth.

Presbyterian Journal: We have been hearing ad nauseam of individual cups in the Sacrament of the Supper, for fear of disease from the common cup! And now it is reported that, at a ministers' meeting recently held in Elmira, New York, where the subject was under discussion, it was seriously proposed that a plate of clean straws be passed around with the cup as the simplest solution of the microbe problem, giving individual straws instead of cups.

United Presbyterian: Father and mother vowed at the marriage altar to bear each other's burdens, but what of the children? Paul said, "Let them learn to requite their parents." Blessed study! Precious privilege! This is one of the children's texts. We wish that every pastor would preach upon it, and that every son and daughter might be there to hear. Young men and women, study to requite your parents. Bear their burdens for them while you may. No other memory will give you so much pleasure in after life.

D. L. Moody: I pity those people who have to be fed with the ecclesiastical spoon. I know some people forty years old who cannot feed themselves yet. They believe what a minister tells them, but know nothing else. The Bible is full of golden nuggets. The deeper you dig the more gold you get; the better the truth is. We have many prayer meetings, but how few Bible readings! Would it not be well to gather our friends in our homes and have Bible study? A great many look on the Bible like they look on the great American desert. They have never explored it. In the 119th Psalm David prays God nine times to quicken him according unto His word. If you want a healthy soul, just let it feed on the Word of God. The more it feeds the healthier it gets.

Teacher and Scholar.

Nov. 25th, 1894. } OPPOSITION TO CHRIST. { Mark iii. 22-35.

GOLDEN TEXT.—John i. 11.

Jesus was making great progress in His work. His many glorious miracles, the vast crowds attracted to Him, producing ever increasing hatred on the part of His enemies.

Time.—Autumn, A.D. 28, some weeks after the Sermon on the Mount.

Place.—Capernaum, on the sea of Galilee.

The gracious, kind treatment of all classes by Jesus, His mighty miracles; His wonderful teaching, so loving, righteous and simple—so devout, comforting and uplifting was undermining that of Scribes and Pharisees, and drawing away their followers, hence their bitter hatred and opposition.

I. The charge of the Scribes against Jesus. He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils, casteth He out devils—v. 22. II. Christ's answer—v. 23-27. III. The unpardonable sin—v. 28-30. IV. Christ's true relatives and friends—v. 31-35.

I. The Charge Against Jesus—He Hath Beelzebub, etc.—It was made by Scribes who had come down from Jerusalem, specially to oppose, harass and thwart Him. He had just healed one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb, so that he became sane, saw and spoke, and all the people were amazed and said, "Is not this the son of David?" The Scribes said, "He is possessed by Beelzebub," or a Beelzebub. Beel means lord; zebub, or zebul, here means, probably, dwelling; and the charge was that Jesus was lord of the dwelling, or place, where evil spirits dwell; that is, that He was the head of the family of evil spirits, that He ruled them as a man does his household. They did not, they could not deny the miracles, but they said that He wrought them—cast out devils—by the power of the prince of the devils, that is, Satan. They insinuated that Jesus was playing a part under Satan, pretending to heal those possessed, that He might win the people to His pestiferous teaching.

II. Christ's Answer. V. 23-27.—He knew their thoughts—Matthew xii. 25. He called them unto Him and said unto them in parables, taught them by way of comparisons, illustrations and analogies. He showed them that what they charged Him with was impossible. How can Satan cast out Satan; absurd and suicidal. Satan would in this way be acting contrary to his very nature and undoing his own work—v. 24-26.

V. 27.—Satan is a strong man; he has a house and goods; he has property, authority and rule which he prizes. How can he be deprived of these and spoiled, except by one stronger than himself. Jesus is the one stronger, He came to destroy the works of the devil, and by His works teaching and life, was doing it.

III. The Unpardonable Sin. V. 28-30.—This is part of his answer to the charge made above of committing the unpardonable sin. In this section, notice that there is such a thing as an unpardonable sin; that the statement of this fact was drawn from Christ, because the Scribes charged Him with having an unclean spirit. They persistently, deliberately and determinedly, hardened their hearts and shut their eyes against the clearest light. One who thus sins against the Holy Spirit, puts himself where no power can soften his heart or change his nature. If we so harden our hearts that we cannot feel the power of the Spirit; if we are past feeling, then there is no hope. It is said of such, God "gives them up." There results a state of sinful activity and hardness which goes on forever. It is thus unpardonable. He who is in this state is guilty (R.V.) of an eternal sin.

IV. Christ's True Relatives and Friends. V. 31-35.—Some think these to be literal brothers, and others, cousins. The reason of their coming to Him just now is given in v. 21. They thought Him beside Himself. They did not yet believe in Him. His conduct was imprudent and fanatical in the last degree. His doctrines were new and strange, and the crowds who ran after Him had affected His mind. So they came to look after and take care of Him. It is often the case, it has always been so, that the most ardent, earnest Christians are misunderstood by those around them, by members of their own family. They are called peculiar, fanatical. When told that His mother and brethren were outside seeking for Him, He answered, Who is my mother or my brethren? And he looked round, etc. Whosoever shall do the will of God (Matthew xii. 50) of my Father which is in heaven the same is my brother, and my sister and mother. Doing the will of God proceeds from having the same filial affection, the same spirit of obedience, the same concern for the Father's interest and honour, as He had. This closest, dearest, most lasting bond, doing the Father's will, includes the closest of all ties, even that of mother. This doing the Father's will is the only tie which makes men the children of God, true brothers and sisters, and includes all family ties and relationships.

Lessons.—1. What blind invincible hatred of God, persistent perversity of will, and malevolence of judgment, professedly good men may be guilty of.

2. The solemn and awful possibility of going to such a length in sin as to preclude the possibility of repentance and pardon.

3. When men cannot stop a good work, the next worst thing they can do is to misrepresent it by giving it a bad name, or ascribing bad motives.

4. No one can have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, who desires His influence to deliver him from sin and enable him to love God.

5. Doing the will of God, is the only requirement for the most tender, close and dear relationship to God and to one another.